The
BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGIST

PUBLISHED BY
The American Schools of Oriental Research
(Jerusalem and Baghdad)
409 Prospect St., New Haven, Conn.

Vol. III | May, 1940 | No. 2

Fig. 1. Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives

HOW ARCHAEOLOGY HELPS THE STUDENT OF THE BIBLE

Every serious student of the Bible in these days knows that he cannot afford to ignore archaeology. As regards the kind of help which archaeology gives, however, narrow and quite inadequate ideas are all too prevalent. From many recent books and articles one might infer that all archaeology could do for biblical studies was to "confirm" this or that statement in Scriptures. Readers of *The Biblical Archaeologist* hardly need to be told that the results of excavation are far richer and more varied than that. The purpose of the present article is to recall briefly the principle ways in which archaeology helps us to understand and appreciate the Bible. Every point which will be stated might be developed at great length.[1]

To understand the Bible we must first of all know, as nearly as possible, exactly what its authors wrote; that is, we must try to establish the correct text. The oldest manuscripts we have were written generations or

The Biblical Archaeologist is published quarterly (February, May, September, December) by the American Schools of Oriental Research. Its purpose is to meet the need for a readable, non-technical, yet thoroughly reliable account of archaeological discoveries as they are related to the Bible.

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Subscription Price: 50¢ per year, payable to the American Schools of Oriental Research, 409 Prospect St., New Haven.

Checks or money orders sent in **foreign currency must add 20%** to subscription price.

even in many cases centuries after the death of the sacred historians, prophets, and apostles. The scribes who copied them made many mistakes, so that again and again the manuscripts differ—not to such an extent, to be sure, as to affect any vital religious teaching, but often to a degree which makes it impossible to tell what was originally written in particular passages. It is doubtless too much to hope that the excavator's spade—or, rather, hoe—will ever turn up the original 'autograph' of one of Paul's letters, or the roll written by Baruch at the dictation of Jeremiah. The discovery of older manuscripts than those preserved in monasteries or libraries, however, not only is possible but has occurred repeatedly. In Egypt, where the dry climate preserves materials that are elsewhere perishable, rolls of papyrus have been discovered in great quantities, and some of them contain portions of the Old and New Testaments. Being much older than the most ancient manuscripts hitherto known, these are obviously very important for the establishment of the text. No sensational new readings or corrections have been demonstrated, but the choice between variant readings in the later manuscripts is facilitated and placed on a firmer basis.

Assuming that the wording of the text has been established as accurately as possible, our next task is to interpret it. This requires a thorough understanding of the languages in which it is written. Here archaeology renders its second important service. The Hebrew language of the Old Testament is much better understood than it was before the related language of the Babylonians and Assyrians became known through the discovery of countless clay tablets and stone monuments. More recently the extensive literary texts found at Ras Shamra,[2] which are written in a language even more closely related to Hebrew, have begun to enrich our knowledge of the language in which most of the Old Testament is written. Inscriptions in the Hebrew language itself, such as the Lachish letters,[3] have been unearthed also, enabling scholars to trace the development of the language and thus determine its characteristics in any particular period. The Aramaic language also appears in many inscriptions. Not only were parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra written in this tongue; it was also the language spoken by Jesus and his disciples, and the earliest Christian records were probably written in Aramaic. One important inscription in the Jewish Aramaic of Jesus' time has been found.[4] Especially important is the

1. This article, indeed, is virtually an abstract of part of the writer's book on the subject (not yet published).
2. **B.A.**, vol. II, no. 1, pp. 1 ff.
3. Vol. II, no. 4, pp. 30 ff.
4. Vol. I, no. 2, p. 8.

new understanding of New Testament Greek provided by the countless letters, business records, and other documents of everyday life, written on papyrus, which have been found in Egypt, showing the kind of Greek used by the common people of the Roman empire at the time when the New Testament was written.

But it is not enough to understand the words and the grammar of ancient writings like those of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible was written not only in other languages than ours; it was written by and for people who lived in a world quite different from ours, and it speaks in terms of their life. To understand it rightly, therefore, we must understand the life of its authors and their first readers, the life of the people to whom Jesus spoke and the people to whom Paul wrote. This is by all odds

Fig. 2. The Victory (Nike) of Samothrace

the most important of the contributions of archaeology, giving us the orientation we need to read the Bible as it was meant to be read.

The sacred story unfolds in a particular geographical setting, and archaeology makes this much clearer by indentifying important sites named in the record, such as Lachish[5] or Ezion-geber,[6] or even particular buildings, like the Praetorium where Jesus appeared before Pilate.[7] The setting in time as well as in space is brought into sharper focus through the fixing of dates by the records of the Assyrians and other nations. That archaeology cannot always solve at once the problems of biblical chronology is shown by the battle royal still being waged by historians regarding the date of the Israelite conquest of Canaan, but even here successive discoveries gradually reduce the limits within which the solution must be found.

No less important is the cultural setting, including the social customs of Bible times. One of the most conspicuous examples of what archaeology

5. Vol. I, no. 4, pp. 21 ff.
6. Vol. I, no. 3, pp. 13 ff.
7. Vol. I, no. 3, pp. 17 ff.

can do for us in this respect is afforded by the Nuzu tablets.[8] Since the Bible refers often to the houses in which people lived, the fortifications of their cities, the weapons and tools they used, and other material objects of daily life, an accurate acquaintance with these is helpful. Instead of thinking of Abraham or David as dressed in a costume of the Renaissance period and living in a marble palace in a European landscape, as painters used to picture them, we are now able by excavation to uncover the actual buildings and objects themselves, or what is left of them. Gates like that of Ezion-geber,[9] houses,[10] dishes and bowls,[11] lamps,[12] seals,[13] slingstones,[14] and many other things give us a vivid picture of ancient life as it actually was lived. Industry and trade,[15] education and literature,[16] art and religion[17] can all be seen now in a clear and true light.

As a result of all this, not only does the background of the Bible appear in a truer perspective and with greater accuracy of detail. Particular points in the Bible itself are illuminated. In the first place, much is explained which was previously obscure. We know what the cherubim were like,[18] what the so-called "sun images" really were,[19] who the Horites were,[20] and why Laban was anxious to recover his idols from Jacob.[21] Other items, which do not require such explanation, are vividly illustrated. Many of the items mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs provide illustrations of various passages in the Bible.

It must be frankly admitted that the results of excavation sometimes raise as many problems as they solve. The relation between the Hebrews and the Habiru of whom we read in the Tell el-Amarna tablets and other ancient documents has not yet been exhausted as a topic for discussion. The last word has not been said regarding the capture of Jericho and Ai, or the subsequent progress of the conquest of Canaan. Indeed, much as those who are primarily interested in the "confirmation" of the Bible may hate to admit it, we must in all honesty recognize the inescapable fact that at some points archaeology has discovered closed errors in the Scriptural record. This should not be a shock to us, for it is well known that the Bible often gives parallel accounts of the same events which differ in details and therefore cannot both be true in every particular. This does not disturb those whose major concern is with the spiritual teachings of the Bible rather than the details of ancient history, and who think of the inspiration of the Scriptures as something far more profound and vital than a meticulous and invariable accuracy regarding past events. Consequently we need not be dismayed at what we cannot in any case deny. Our conviction of the religious value of the Bible is not shaken by the discovery that the king of Gerar in the time of Abraham and Isaac could not have been a Philistine, or that Darius came not before but after Cyrus.

8. Vol. III, no. 1, pp. 1 ff.
9. Vol. II, no. 4, p. 39.
10. Vol. I, no. 3, p. 15.
11. Vol. II, no. 1, pp. 9 ff; no. 2, pp. 16 ff.
12. Vol. II, no. 2, pp. 22 ff.
13. Vol. I, no. 2, pp. 10 ff.
14. Vol. II, no. 4, pp. 41 ff.
15. Vol. I, no. 3, pp. 15 ff., 19 f; vol. II, no. 4, pp. 37 ff.
16. Vol. II, no. 1, pp. 2 f.
17. Vol. II, no. 1, pp. 4-6.
18. Vol. I, no. 1, pp. 1 f.
19. Vol. I, no. 2, pp. 9 f.
20. Vol. III, no. 1, p. 12.
21. Vol. III, no. 1, p. 6.

As a matter of fact, aside from such occasional items as these, even as a record of ancient history the Bible is supported by archaeological evidence again and again. On the whole there can be no question that the results of excavation have increased the respect of scholars for the Bible as a collection of historical documents. The confirmation is both general and specific. The fact that the record can be so often explained or illustrated by archaeological data shows that it fits into the framework of history as only a genuine product of ancient life could do. In addition to this general authentication, however, we find the record verified repeatedly at specific points. Names of places and persons turn up at the right places and in the right periods. One of the most striking examples is the recently published mention of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in a list of persons supported at the Babylonian court in the time of the Exile.

This brief sketch may suffice to indicate that the help afforded by archaeology in the study of the Bible is rich and varied. By providing evi-

Fig. 3. The Harbor of Neapolis

dence for the establishment of the text and materials for the fuller understanding of the language, by lighting up the whole background so that the figures of biblical history no longer move in solitude across a dark stage, by explaining many details and illustrating others, and by confirming the essential authenticity of the record, though at the same time raising new problems and correcting a detail here and there, archaeology leads the student of the Bible into an incomparably fuller understanding and deeper appreciation than was ever before possible.

Perhaps it is not superfluous to add, however, that such appreciation and understanding are possible only if the student's spirit is attuned to the deeper notes which are independent of time and place, because they are universal and eternal. Otherwise he will be like one who would come to the study of a great symphony with a detailed knowledge of musical history and theory, but without any ear for music. Given the primary spiritual equipment for the understanding of the Bible, one will find the new knowledge provided by archaeology an invaluable aid.

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND ST. PAUL'S JOURNEYS IN GREEK LANDS

A good deal has already been written about the contributions of excavation and scholarly research to the further illustration of the Apostle's missionary journeys in Greek lands. Yet there is perhaps still a place for a more detailed treatment that will take congnizance of the latest discoveries, and for a brief account of the results in general achieved by archaeological investigation at some of the Greek sites mentioned in the New Testament. It was with this in mind that the editor of this journal asked the author to collect relevant material during a period of study in Mediterranean lands which made possible a visit to most of the places concerned.

St. Paul made two trips to Greece. The first occupied his time from

Fig. 4. Macedonian Itinerary of St. Paul

late in 49 to 53 A.D., and the route (cf. Fig. 4) was Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, Corinth, and back to Syria—and later in 53 to Ephesus, on the Asia Minor Coast. In 56 he made a second European tour, this time only through northern Greece. The route was again Troas to Philippi, and then back to Troas and down the Asia Minor Coast, with brief stops at Assos, Mytilene, Chios, Samos, and Miletos (cf. Acts 16:11-20:16).

It has seemed most logical to discuss these cities by following "in the steps of the Apostle." In this article only the northern cities (Troas to Beroea) can be treated, but it is planned to continue with the others in coming issues of *The Biblical Archaeologist*.

About ten miles south of the western end of the Dardanelles (ancient Hellespont) lie the deserted ruins of the city of Troas. It had originally been called Alexandria Troas (this whole peninsula was known as the Troad, i.e. the district about the famous city of Troy) to distinguish it from several other cities named Alexandria, but its regular designation later became simply Troas. Its adequate harbor, now a shallow lagoon, and

its strategic position as the last link on the Asiatic side in the regular sea route to Europe ensured its prosperity during the period of the Roman Empire, and indeed it is said to have been considered as a possible new capital in the east. Today the ruins of a theater, an aqueduct, and city walls some six miles in circumference are still to be seen, but no systematic examination of the site has yet been undertaken. Most of the stones for its building appear to have been removed from Troy itself.

One day's journey took the missionaries from Troas past the little island of Tenedos, well known in the stories of the Trojan war, to the island of Samothrace. From its highest peak one can see Mount Ida in the Troad to the southeast, Mount Athos at the end of the nearest of the three peninsulas of Chalcidice to the west, and the mainland of Macedonia, whither Paul was voyaging, off to the northwest. Samothrace was known in antiquity as the home of an obscure cult, that of the Cabiri. Expeditions conducted in turn by French, Austrian, and currently by American archaeologists have examined this sanctuary and the adjacent town at various

Fig. 5. Market Place and Basilica, Philippi. The modern road in the foreground follows the Roman Egnatian Way.

times since the middle of the last century. It was here that, beginning in 1873, the first important scientific archaeological undertaking was carried out. The best known single discovery is, of course, the superb statue known as the Nike (or Victory) of Samothrace, which was unearthed in 1863 and is now one of the most prized possessions of the Louvre in Paris (Fig. 2). Samothrace was sparsely inhabited in antiquity, as it is today, and the Apostle did not tarry there.

The next day's sail brought the travellers to the port of Neapolis, beautifully situated on a high promontory stretching out into a large bay which is protected by the island of Thasos (Fig. 3). Neapolis means "new city" in Greek, and, in the case of the important south Italian city, the same name has been slightly changed to Naples. This particular town, however, is now called Kavalla, a vulgar Latin word meaning "horse." This name is probably to be explained by the fact that it was an important terminus in the days of the horse postal service. In the early Christian period it bore still another name, Christopolis, or "city of Christ," doubtless in commemoration of St. Paul's visits. There are extensive remains of mediaeval fortifications and of a Roman aqueduct in the older part, but,

as one can understand in the case of a site which has been continuously occupied, there are few visible traces of habitation of the Roman period and earlier. Nevertheless, minor excavations in the vicinity of the Mediaeval fortress have brought to light ample evidence of Roman and Greek occupation, in the form of coins, pottery, and other small objects, and carefully cut ancient building blocks are incorporated in later fortifications and buildings. The town boasts of a fine museum in which the antiquities from the whole district, and especially from nearby Philippi, are being arranged.

From Neapolis the missionaries turned inland along the much traveled road some eight miles in length joining the seaport with Philippi, "the chief city of that part of Macedonia." From the pass in the lofty Pangaean range, which runs parallel to the coast, one obtains a wonderful view southward to Neapolis and the Aegean and northward to Philippi and the Macedonian plain, where the army of Brutus and Cassius engaged that of Antony and Octavian to decide the mastery of the Roman world. Although the site of Philippi is now deserted, it can easily be identified even from a distance by three mediaeval towers standing on its steep acropolis, and by a ruined but still impressive Christian basilica (Direkler) in the plain just to the west. Here French archaeologists worked from 1914 to 1938, and the results of their efforts are now being published.

It was at Philippi that the missionaries reached the great Via Egnatia which connected the East with Rome, leading through Thrace, Macedonia, and Illyria to Dyrrachium on the Adriatic Sea, where one took ship to Brundisium in Italy and then travelled overland to Rome. A section of this old Roman road, which ran directly through the city on almost the same line as the modern highway, has been laid bare where it intersected the city wall at the northwest edge of Philippi. The discovery of the foundations of a great arched gateway at this point has led to the belief that this is the gate referred to in the *Acts of the Apostles,* where mention is made of a Jewish "place of prayer" situated "outside the gate." Hence, the place of prayer should have lain not far away. It is said to have been "by a riverside," and, since there is in this whole vicinity only one water course which is worthy of the name "river" and it borders the Egnatian Way at only one place a little more than a mile west of the city limits, there can be little doubt but that this was the exact spot where the gospel was first proclaimed on the soil of Europe. The Romans were generally tolerant of the various religions of their subject peoples, and merely stipulated that foreign cults must remain outside the city limits. Hence, the Jews were compelled to gather for worship "outside the gate," and they would naturally choose a place close to the river, to facilitate their religious ablutions. The fact that they apparently did not build a synagogue would indicate that they were not strong numerically.

The market place ("agora" in Greek, "forum" in Latin) of Philippi, to which the apostles were dragged before the magistrates, lay between the basilica and the acropolis. It has been completely uncovered and, from the lower wall courses and pavements still preserved, the general plan can be clearly understood (Fig. 5). It conforms to the regular outlines of a Roman forum, with a large paved rectangular space bounded by porticoes and temple facades. On the north side is a rectangular podium to which steps gave access on two sides. It has been

recognized as a tribunal or platform, from which orators spoke to the crowds gathered in the forum and where magistrates dispensed justice. One cannot assert that it was in front of this very tribunal that sentence was passed on the missionaries, for almost the whole forum complex was rebuilt in the second century A.D., but apparently the whole plan was not radically altered from that of St. Paul's day. Vitruvius, a writer on architecture who lived not long before this period, tells us that the city prison, along with other civic buildings, bordered the agora, so that it is probably safe to assume that the prison where the apostles were confined was on the site of one of the buildings whose lower courses still border the forum. The French have, of course, studied many other monuments, notably an interesting series of pagan shrines cut into the rock of the steep western slope of the acropolis, and a large and fairly well preserved theater lying on its southern side.

Fig. 6. The Lion of Amphipolis

Although there is good reason to believe that the church at Philippi made steady progress from its founding by St. Paul, the archaeological discoveries relative to the Christian community during the early period are quite rare. One interesting inscription in Greek, dated with probability in 262/3 A.D., records: "Aurelius Capito, junior presbyter of the universal church, set up this monument to his own parents and his own wife, Bebia Paula, and to his dearest son Elpidius." Another somewhat later, also in Greek and found at Neapolis, reads: "Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary and crucified for us, help this city to stand forever and guard those who dwell in Thee for Thine own glory." The latest study tends to establish a date in the time of the emperor Justinian (6th Century A.D.) for the rich and elaborate Derekler basilica, but the foundations of a large and considerably earlier Christian church were discovered on a long terrace above the forum and nearer the acropolis, proving that the Christian community was then becoming well-to-do and recognized.

From Philippi the travellers proceeded westward toward Thessalonica along the Via Egnatia, breaking their journey at Amphipolis, near the

mouth of the Strymon river, and at Apollonia, lying about half way between Amphipolis and Thessalonica. Very little systematic excavation has been carried on at either of these sites. Amphipolis was a large city strategically situated to command the pass into the western Macedonian plain, and its extensive ruins would richly repay careful examination. Recently, Mr. Lincoln MacVeagh, the American minister to Greece, has been instrumental in providing for the preservation and reconstruction of the impressive "lion of Amphipolis" (Fig. 6), which was erected, apparently in the first half of the fourth century B.C., to commemorate some as yet unidentified victory. It must have been one of the most striking landmarks for one journeying along this road in St. Paul's day. A short excavation at Amphipolis in 1920 exposed the foundations of an early Christian basilica. Probably the Christian faith spread there from Philippi or Thessalonica, since Paul seems not be have remained long enough to establish a nucleus of believers.

Fig. 7. Salonica, Modern Thessalonica

Thessalonica (currently abbreviated to Salonica) is situated at the head of the largest gulf indenting the Balkan peninsula, and since antiquity has been a vital link between the Mediterranean countries and those of central Europe. During the war of 1914-18 it was a very important military base. Thessalonica was founded by Cassander of Macedonia and named after his wife, the sister of Alexander the Great. In Roman times its sea-borne commerce and its connection with the interior by the Via Egnatia and other routes ensured its prosperity, and it is not surprising that the Jews, with their usual commercial sagacity, had established a strong colony there and built a synagogue. One notes with interest that at the end of the fifteenth century a large group of Jewish refugees from Spain settled in Thessalonica and still speak a "Sephardic" Spanish. Today Thessalonica is, after Athens, the largest city of Greece, with a population of about 237,000.

No excavation on a large scale has been attempted here, owing chiefly to the cost of demolishing the overlying buildings of the modern city. However, a considerable number of monuments of the late Roman and Byzantine periods are still standing. The acropolis, commanding an incomparable view of the lower city and the gulf (Fig. 7), is still protected by well preserved walls and towers of the mediaeval period, but these

incorporate many ancient blocks, some of which bear inscriptions, and rest on foundations dating to the Greek period. The old Egnatian Way, which remains the main thorough-fare of the city, is spanned at one point by the fine triple arch (Fig. 8[1]) built by the emperor Galerius (early fourth century A.D.). Its battered sculptures depict Roman victories over the threatening Persians, and on it there is mention of the politarchs, before whom Paul was arraigned. Two early and important Christian churches, dedicated respectively to St. George and St. Demetrius, are also standing in relatively good condition, and their history has been elucidated by the careful examination and excavation of competent scholars. It has recently been shown that the church of St. George forms part of a great, late Roman complex which included also the arch of Galerius.

Fig. 8. A Portion of the Arch of Galerius

These churches owe their preservation to the fact that during the period of Turkish domination in Greece they were converted into mosques, and beside the church of St. George is one of the very few minarets still standing in Greece. While the wanton damage that was often done to Christian churches by the Turks is regrettable, it is to be remembered that it was this very transformation of church into mosque that saved certain churches from complete ruin, just as it was the transformation of certain pagan temples into Christian churches which preserved some of the best surviving examples of the architecture of the classical period. The church of St. George is a great circular structure about 72 feet in diameter with a domed roof. It has now been declared a national monument and houses a collection of Byzantine antiquities. The church of St. Demetrius was perhaps the most beautiful basilica in Greece until the great fire of 1917 damaged it very severely. It was dedicated in the fifth century A.D. to Demetrius, the most revered Saint of Thessalonica, who was martyred in that city about the year 306. The main part is divided into five aisles by four rows of graceful Corinthian columns. Fine but unfortunately frag-

1. I am indebted to Dr. David M. Robinson for the illustrations in figures 3, 5, and 6, and to Dr. H. A. Thompson for those in figures 7 and 8.

mentary mosaics, which had been plastered over by the Turks, have recently been discovered in the apse. On one pillar St. Demetrius is portrayed standing between a bishop and another individual whom an inscription designates as the founder of the church. The rich colors of their vestments are excellently preserved. The ambitious program of restoring this magnificent monument has unfortunately been halted for almost two years owing to lack of funds. In another part of the city a former mosque has been converted into an archaeological museum, in which antiquities from Thessalonica and nearby sites are displayed.

The last city in Macedonia which St. Paul visited on his first tour was Beroea (modern Verria), situated some 40 miles west of Thessalonica and about 25 miles from the gulf. At that time it was a flourishing town, and it still supports a fairly large population. The Apostle apparently found there a considerable Jewish colony, for they had built a synagogue, and there is today a Jewish quarter in the modern town. One notices various well preserved sections of mediaeval walls, and here, too, many blocks from more ancient fortifications or buildings have been re-used. The inhabitants point with pride to the very spot from which St. Paul is supposed to have preached to these, his most sympathetic hearers. From Beroea the Apostle went on to Athens to await the other members of his party who had remained in Thessalonica.

*WILLIAM A. McDONALD**

THE NEXT ISSUE

The Conquest and Settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan has been celebrated in song and story, and the thrill of it seems to have led to some of the most intriguing literature of the Old Testament. Did the fall of Jericho involve psychology, geology, theology, or all together? The perplexing problems connected with these stirring events in Israelite history are still far from being finally solved, but archaeology is now in a position to illuminate much that has heretofore been obscure. The September issue will be devoted to this subject.

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